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Xosé SOTO ANDIÓN

Universidade deVigo
xsotoandion@uvigo.es

The semantics of Caer

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The semantics of *Caer*

Xosé Soto Andión

Universidade deVigo

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse constructions with Caer as nucleus in Galician in contrast with Spanish. We will try to examine the variety of these structures to prove, in the light of the theory of the construction and in the theoretical frame of the semantic-syntactic schemes, that this predicate cannot be compartmentalized within a single semantic class of action and movement, since it takes part in constructions of action, process, state, situation. With a basis on the concept of construction, we will try to project this semantic concept into these structures in order to analyse these new schemes, new contents and a new semantic roles, something important in order to verify the relevance of lexis, semantics and syntax interface in languages.

Keywords: semantic and syntactic scheme, construction, action, process, state, situation.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on the semantics of *caer*, a verb extensively used in oral and written Galician.¹

Our immediate aim is to corroborate the hypothesis that *caer*, and other motion verbs (see also Soto Andión 2010, 2013), go beyond their primary meaning of action with movement, being also a predicate that works in structures which can reflect process, state and situation; so we don't think it is very suitable to establish verb classifications with inflexible meanings such as action verbs, state, movement verbs...(cf. Levin 1993: 111-276). Secondly, our aim is to provide data useful for the making of contrastive studies and the development of grammars and dictionaries both conventional and

structural; we also intend to offer relevant information for theoretical linguistics in order to establish universal presuppositions derived from the particularities manifested in languages of the world² and in order to verify the relevance of lexis, semantic and syntax interface for grammatical studies.

2 CAER AS PREDICATE IN INTRANSITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Caer acts as predicate in constructions that we classify as intransitive. Intransitivity is an important linguistic phenomenon in the grammar of most European languages. For Portuguese, Spanish, English, or French, research has been done into similar verbs. These studies focus on the syntactic and semantic description of movement, especially to distinguish unergativity from inaccusativity; they usually mention *caer* or similar verbs partially or collaterally, these being included inside the widest perspective of the so-called intransitive verbs of movement with displacement. This proceeding has its base in a semantic conception centred on the verbal lexeme.

From a transversal point of view, we consider intransitive both those constructions that don't manifest a transition of an event towards a second entity and those that, even if manifesting transition, do it in a non-direct way.

The intransitive phenomena is here approached from its *construction* dimension, placing the interrelation between the elements of the clausal structure as the grammatical axis and deriving from the construction rather than from the verb the semantic and syntactic functions.³ Some contemporary linguistics schools of thought, such as the cognitive and construction grammars by Langacker (1991), Kay (1997), Goldberg (1995, 2006), pay particular attention to both the syntactic and the semantic dimensions and their interrelation avoiding to separate language from other cognitive abilities. Langacker, for instance, states that lexicon and grammar, like syntactic and semantic structures, are inseparable. Dik (1997) utilizes three distinct levels of grammatical functions (semantic, pragmatic and syntactic) and asserts that syntax is not independent, that there is a dependency between the syntactic component and the semantic one, without excluding the existence of internal principles in the syntax itself. Croft (2001, 128) establishes an interconnection between what he calls the conceptual structure based on the experiences of the speaker and the syntactic and semantic structure. Croft also believes that in

general transitivity and intransitivity phenomena must be applied the clause as a whole, not solely to the verb. Therefore, our approach in the study of the constructions which *caer* as a nucleus is an interdisciplinary one, taking into account the various interacting components: lexical, the syntactic and the semantic.

3 STATES, PROCESSES AND ACTIONS

State is a semantic (macro)role or (hyper)role (Van Valin/Lapolla 1997: 140 ss.; Kibrik 1997: 290 ss.) applied to conditions that lack a temporal internal development; we can refer to their duration but not to their progress or culmination. As Rothstein says (2004: 14): "states or stative eventualities are cumulative and non-dynamic, i.e. [-telic, -stages]. They are also totally homogeneous". States designate the condition of an entity or individual, locative-type situations (e.g. *Vigo cae polo sur / Vigo cae por el sur / Vigo is in the south*) whose semantic role is that of *situated*, or characteristics or properties as in *o vestido non che cae ben* (*el vestido no te cae bien / the dress doesn't suit you*). These are entities or individuals whose semantic role is that of *state carrier* and *characterised*.⁴

States can manifest a permanent or temporary character (e.g. *Sempre me caeu ben / I have always liked him; agora cáeslle mal / now he doesn't like you*) and be the consequence of a previous process or action (e.g. *Axudoume moito e cáeme ben / he has helped me a lot and I like him*).

Processes represent the transit from one state to another, carried out by an individual or entity (*experimentors*). These processes can be of diverse classes, according to change experienced by the subject in relation to a concrete property or quality. Occasionally the same structure implies two parallel or superposed processes. In this case 'caer' can have a diminutive meaning (e.g. *Caer a natalidade / birthrate falls; caer o emprego / employment falls*) as well as a worsening one (e.g. *Caer na droga / fall into drugs*).

We establish the following types, although certain processes can overlie others and can have a particular value that includes or mingles with other types of process where the content is more generic: acquisitive or augmentative (e.g. *Engordar / fatten*) vs. privative or diminutive (e.g. *Enfraquecer / enflaquecer / to thin*); intensifiers and

lesseners (e.g. Acentuarse / emphasize, abrandar / ablandar / soften); transformative and modifier (e.g. Evaporarse / evaporate, estar caendo no pesimismo / estar cayendo en el pesimismo / be falling into pessimism); enhancement and worsening (e.g. Progresar / progress, caer en depresión / fall into depression); adaptive (e.g. Adaptarse / to adapt); continuative (e.g. Continuar / continue, perdurar / to last...).

Action is a generic macro role that indicates activity and dynamism, either physical or mental, either of an individual or of an entity, whose semantic roles we call *agent*, *strength*, *effect producer*. We could say that "activities, like states, are atelic, but unlike states, they are dynamic" (Rothstein 2004: 17). Action is a generic macro role that due to its versatility can overlap or assimilate the mentioned semantic roles or even the *event*.

Actions are not only physical but also mental (pensar / think, matinar / ponder, cismar / split), because the individual that carries them out makes a mental effort, which can produce the same tiredness and exhaustion as any physical action. Along these lines, some structures are denominated as mental action (e.g. Non caer no conto / not fall for the joke), which we will outline below.

Events are the various facts that translate processes or actions. Events occasionally appear next to states as types of occurrence. Some authors (Van Hout 2002...) utilize this denomination to define them –from an wide perspective – as semantic and conceptual categories that determine schemes and eventive types in relation to the arguments and establish eventive relations in accordance with temporal values. On many occasions present interferences and contact points with other semantic roles; the content itself derived from each particular construction will be what best distinguishes them; for instance the subject role of ‘unha terrible peste caeu sobre o país / una terrible peste ha caído sobre el país / a terrible plague fell upon the country; unha grande desgraza caeu sobre as nosas familias / una gran desgracia cayó sobre nuestras familias / a terrible misfortune fell on our families’ is *event* rather than *agent* or *affected*.

Ultimately, all these types represent semantic categories that can be re-categorised by one another, meaning that the same predicate is capable of functioning in different semantic schemes: ‘María cae / Maria falls’ is an *action* that implies movement, ‘María non cae / Maria doesn’t fall’ [she doesn’t fall into the trap; she doesn’t realise] means having or not having an ability or lack of one.

Some types of event stand out for their frequent use within so-called intransitive structures. This is the case with actions or activities, notably those that constitute movement. From a linguistic point of view, the semantic field of movement is vast, complex, and of difficult systematization (Soto Andión 2010), though events of movement can project towards other less concrete fields such as relation, situation, or characterization; verbs like *caer* are generally included. Authors such as Crego (2000), Morimoto (2001) have views on the typology of motion.

Crego differentiates, within movement constructions, those expressing displacement from those expressing ways of displacement, classifying verbs of movement either as *causatives*, which show displacement – directional (e.g. *Dirigirse, subir, bajar* / go to, go up, go down...), situational (e.g. *Levantarse, sentarse, volverse...* / get up, sit down, turn around...) or ways of displacement (e.g. *Pasear, volar...* / stroll, fly...)–, or else as *non causatives* that can also show directional displacement (e.g. *Ir, caer...* / go, fall...) or way of displacement (e.g. *Andar, nadar...* / walk, swim...). All show a series of combinations and restrictions, according to those contents and schemes in which they function.

Morimoto associates the syntactic behaviour of the verb with its lexical meaning. He focuses his study on non-causative movement verbs, which are (a) displacement verbs such as ‘*ir, entrar, subir...* / go, go in, go up...’, with a concrete path and (b) verbs referring to manner of motion, that make reference to ways of moving, subdivided into two farther classes: type 1 such as ‘*andar, correr, nadar, pasear...* / walk, run, swim, stroll...’, that express a displacement or undetermined path; and type 2, such as ‘*ondear, balancearse...* / wave, swing...’, which do not express any path but show an internal movement of the object.

When the expression of movement is very rich and detailed, as in languages like Russian, movement verbs may be able to express themselves by two imperfect forms, specifying the means of transport, the way and the continuity of movement, the entailment of movement to spatial reference points, etc.

4 Structures with *CAER*

4.1 Parameters of analysis

Based upon these theoretical assumptions, we are going to dwell on some prototypical schemes of *caer* and study their semantic-syntactic behaviour in Spanish and Galician, which offer similar construction results.

In order to carry out the empiric part of this work, here are the parameters, detailed in a graphic schematic way, used to analyse the various constructions.

SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC SCHEME. We understand as syntactic scheme the form or pattern of syntactic functions carried out by arguments or participants in the construction, and by semantic scheme the diverse patterns that define the semantic roles exercised by the said participants. Our position in this respect is *maximalist*, which means that we use a varied group of schemes and semantic roles that better express the multiple transmitted events, and differs from those which use an excessively reductive number of schemes and roles. Dik points out that it is not necessarily a closed list, and he is not sure that the categories are enough to collect the diversity of contents transmitted through, for example, the prepositions.

VERB. Meaning according to the structure in which it works.

EXAMPLES. Those numbered come from the corpus used. The others derive from handwritten notes collected from various fonts.

SUBJECT. Most relevant semantic-syntactic features.

COMPLEMENTATION or COMPLEMENT. Most relevant semantic-syntactic features. Complementations are the various syntactic forms the construction takes with the need of other basic functions such as subject and predicate. In contrast to the traditional Anglo-Saxon grammar, for which the label 'complement' alludes to the syntactic function of the direct complement, we use the term in a wider sense, so that 'complement' indicates any syntactic function of the construction with the exception of the subject (direct, indirect, prepositional complement, adverb and predicative) that complements or completes verb meaning in particular and the meaning of the construction in general.

CONSTRUCTION. Main characteristics, voice (active, middle or passive)⁵, person, pronominal value and use of *se*, aspect values.⁶

The exposition is organised taking the number of arguments in each construction (mono argumentative, with two or more arguments) and the contents obtained from the samples collected.

As subject we will use two important syntactic features relating to order (preverbal or post verbal) and their main causes (meaning of the construction, animation, defining, control, theming, presence of *se*, dative...) as well as type and subtype of unity (phrase, clause, noun, infinitive...), and the semantic features of animation, control, specific character, common, continuous... For the complementation we inform of the syntactic function, its degree of obligation, the type and subtype of unity, the order when relevant, some semantic features such as animation, control..., other optional complements such as adverbial subtypes with their semantics roles, dative and predicative. Finally, we focus on the analysis of main characteristics of the semantic nature that affect each studies construction, as aforesaid.

The empirical part of the study reveals and confirms the syntactic-semantic behaviour of the following constructions—documented in the corpus—with *caer* as nucleus.

4.2 Monoargumental Structures

We find structures with one argument here. They show the semantic roles of action, in first place, and process in some cases.

- Person or thing moving downwards under the action of its own weight, and the separation of an object which detaches or loses balance.

- (1) Metinme dentro, caíu a tapa con estrépito e permanecín encunidado / I went in, the cover fell with a tremendous din and I was left bent over
- (2) Os engazos de ferro é pa caña-la folla dos árboles que cae / The iron rake is used to gather the leaves that fell from the trees
- (3) Unha meniña de dez anos caeu dunhas escaleiras dunha casa e morreu / A ten year-old girl fell down the stairs and died

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate* and the semantic scheme is *affected-action*.

The subject can come either before or after the verb. Absence of animation, agentivity and control allow this postposition, as well as when the transmitter focuses on the action. Its prototypical semantic features are [\pm animate], [\pm human], [$+$ concrete],

[±common], [+control], [-control] with non-animated subjects or with some animated as in the case of (5). The control feature can be positive in those cases in which the movement reflected by *caer* is deliberately carried out by an agentive, animated subject, as in (4), thus, the semantic scheme would be *agent-action*, with or without the existence of a *causative* role, which would be “fatigue”, “illness”..., as seen in the example.

The complement is not compulsory. It is frequent the presence of certain optional arguments such as dative or indirect complement (*a*+nominal phrase), with the semantic role of affected in constructions meaning pure vertical movement (e.g. *Caeunos o espello do salón / (se) nos cayó el espejo del salón / The living room mirror fell down; caeunos a lámpada do cuarto / (se) nos ha caído la lámpara del dormitorio / the bedroom lamp fell over*) and in those expressing movement from the separation of a body part indicated by an animated subject (e.g. *Caeulle moito pelo / (se) le ha caído mucho pelo / A lot of his hair has fallen out; caéronlle dous dentes / (se) le han caído dos dientes / two of his teeth have fallen out*). There is also an adverb, represented by a prepositional clause with, among others, the following structures: *de*+nominal phrase with a semantic manner role (e.g. *Caer de cabeza / fall head first*); *de, desde*+nominal phrase/adverbial phrase with semantic origin role or precedence; *de*+nom.phrase with the semantic role of vertical separation movement; *a, ata/hasta/until, contra, en, sobre*+nominal phrase, *contra*+adverbial phrase, with the semantic role of direction without explicit movement (e.g. *Caer a un precipicio / fall off a cliff*) and direction with a movement end, as well as spatial location on an object; *á beira de/al lado de, diante de/delante de, detrás de* + nominal phrase with the semantic role of spatial location, condition (e.g. *Sen a túa axuda non caería a mazá / sin tu ayuda no caería la manzana / the apple would not fall without your help*), concession (e.g. *Mesmo coa túa axuda non caería a mazá / a pesar de tu ayuda no caería la manzana / Despite your help, the apple would not fall*)...

The construction is close to middle voice because of its affected subject. It shows an action which ends in a vertical movement, generally with displacement. It is not usually used in pronominal form in Galician (e.g. **Caeuse da cama*), but it is in Spanish, strengthening the subject and giving prominence to the affected entity (e.g. *Se cayó de la cama / he fell off the bed*). The use of *se* is possible with an animated subject in order

to indicate its indeterminate character. The prototypical aspect values are dynamic, telic and simple; in other cases the atelic and progressive values are reflected (e.g. Caer o pelo / caer(se) el pelo / hair falls out), inceptive (e.g. Empeza a caer a folla / empieza a caer la hoja / the leaf starts to fall) are shown.

- Collapse, a construction coming down, argumentation, etc.

(8) levantime, fun mirar e caíra un pedazo de muro / I got up and looked and a part of the wall had fallen down

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate*, with the semantic scheme *affected-action*. The subject can precede or follow the predicate. The postposition is a consequence of the centre of attention established by the transmitter and of the lack of animation and control. The semantic features are [-animated], [+concrete], [±common], [-control].

The complement is not compulsory. Sometimes there can be an adverb with a semantic role of spatial or temporal location, manner, cause (e.g. Onte co vento caeu un cacho de muro onda a casa / ayer con el viento cayó un pedazo de muro junto a la casa / yesterday, a part of the wall next to the house fell down because of the wind), substitution (e.g. Caeu a árbore en vez do muro / cayó el árbol en vez del muro / the tree fell down instead of the wall)...

The construction shows vertical movement. It comes close to middle voice due to its non-agentive subject. Third person is used in singular or plural. It enables *se* in Spanish strengthening the affected entity (e.g. Se cayó el muro / the wall fell down). The aspect values are dynamic, telic and simple. In certain constructions that answer to patterns of *state-state carrier* and refer to deteriorated physical situation of something (e.g. A casa está caendo / la casa (se) está cayendo / the house is falling apart) the values are stative, atelic.

- To stop resistance, to succumb.

(10) na prisión de Príncipe, naquela que lenta e seguramente caía xa en poder dos sublevados / Prince prison, which was slowly falling into the rebel's hands

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate* and the semantic scheme is *affected-action*. The subject tends to come before the predicate. The semantic features are [\pm animated], [$+$ concrete], [$-$ concrete] (e.g. *A posición caeu en mans do inimigo / la posición cayó en mans del enemigo / the position fell into enemy hands*), [\pm common], [$-$ control].

The complement is not compulsory, although is common the presence of an adverb represented by an adverbial or prepositional phrase, with distinct semantic roles such as manner, temporary location and duration (e.g. *A prisión caeu en dúas semanas / la prisión cayó en dos semanas / the prison fell in two weeks*), possession with animated and human referent (e.g. *Caeu en poder do inimigo / cayó en poder del enemigo / fell into enemy hands*), cause (e.g. *A prisión caeu por culpa de gardas incompetentes / la prisión cayó por culpa de guardianes incompetentes / The prison fell due to incompetent guards*), condition (e.g. *Sen o voso apoio a prisión caería / sin vuestro apoio la prisión caería / The prison would fall without your support*), concession (e.g. *Mesmo co voso apoio a prisión caería / a pesar de vuestro apoio la prisión caería / The prison would fall despite your support*)...

The construction presents an affected subject that comes close to the middle voice. It enables *se* to indicate an undetermined subject. The aspect values are dynamic and telic.

- To die, preferably in combat.

- (13) *Foi un dos primeiros soldados do concello de San Estevo que caeu na guerra / He was one of the first soldiers from San Estevo to fall in the war*

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate*, with the semantic scheme *affected-action*. The subject precedes the predicate. It can be deferred due to transmitter informative priorities and favoured by the absence of agentivity and control. Its semantic features are [$+$ human], [$+$ concrete], [\pm common], [$-$ control].

The complement is not compulsory. Optionally, a circumstantial can appear, with the semantic role of spatial and temporal location, manner, cause (e.g. *Ese ano caera na guerra como un heroe polo fogo amigo / Ese año había caído en la guerra como un*

héroe por fogo amigo / That year he fell in the war as a hero, killed by friendly fire), condition (e.g. Sen o teu auxilio caería / Sin tu auxilio caería / He would fall without your help), concession (e.g. Mesmo coa túa axuda caería / a pesar de tu ayuda caería / He would fall despite your help)...

The construction is in line with the middle voice. *Se* is possible in order to indicate an indeterminated subject. The aspect values are dynamic, telic, punctual and simple.

- To cease to exist, a regime or some representative entity disappears.

(15) No satenta e cinco, que foi cando caeu a Ditadura... / In nineteen seventy-five, when the dictatorship fell....

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate* and the semantic scheme is *affected-action*. The subject tends to come before the predicate. It can come after the predicate when the complement is thematic. The non-animated and non-agentive character of the subject favours postposition. Its semantic features are [-animated], [±concrete], [±common], [-control].

The complement is not obligatory. On occasions there is an adverb with the semantic role of cause, temporary and spatial location, manner (e.g. Aquí ese ano a ditadura caeu pola presión popular / aquí ese año la dictadura cayó por la presión popular / That year the dictatorship fell due to popular pressure here), condition (e.g. Sen o apoio social a ditadura non caería / sin el apoyo social la dictadura no caería / The dictatorship would not fall without social pressure), concession, substitution (e.g. Caeron xustos en lugar de pecadores / cayeron justos en lugar de pecadores / fair fell in the place of sinners), addition...

The construction has active voice form, but as in previous samples it is close to the middle voice because of the non-agentive subject. It is generally used in singular or plural third person. It is not registered with *se* and its aspect values are dynamic and telic.

- To suffer deceit, capture.

- (17) Hoxe caerá na trampa e fusilarémolo, xa veredes / Today, he will fall into the trap and I will shoot him dead, you'll see

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate*. The semantic scheme is *affected-action*.

The subject usually comes before the predicate, except when information is focused on the action. Its semantic features are [+human], [+concrete], [±common], [-control].

The complement is not compulsory (e.g. Hoxe ha caer, dígocho eu / hoy caerá, te lo digo yo / Today he will fall, I tell you), although there is often an adverb, performed by a prepositional phrase of structure *en*+nominal phrase, whose nominal phrase has a nucleus of a noun with ‘trampa (trap), engaño (deceit), embuste (lie)...’, which tends to be singular. It has semantic features [-animated], [+common], [-concrete]. Optionally, there can be an adverb with the semantic role of temporary or spatial location, manner, cause (e.g. Hoxe caerá por despistado / hoy caerá por despistado / today he will fall for being absentminded).

The construction is in line with the middle voice. It allows *se* (e.g. Cáese nesa trampa con facilidade / se cae en esa trampa con facilidad / fall into that trap easily) to indicate an undetermined subject. The aspect values are dynamic, telic, on occasions iterative.

- To win a prize, reciprocate a job, task or encumbrance.

- (19) A lotaría non caeu este ano / The lottery was not won here this year

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate*, with the semantic scheme *affected-action*.

The subject can precede or follow the predicate. The postposition is a consequence of the semantics of the construction, of the non-agentive and inanimate character of the subject, and sometimes of the presence of a dative (e.g. Non lle caeu a lotaría / No le cayó la lotería / the lottery was never won here). Its semantic features are [-animated], [+concrete] and [-continuous] or also [-concrete] and [+continuous] e.g. A sorte cae do lado dos ricos / la suerte cae del lado de los ricos / luck falls on the side of the rich, [-control].

The complement is not obligatory. There is often a dative pronoun and/or a prepositional phrase (*a*+nom. phrase), generally before the subject (e.g. Non me caeu a

lotaría este año / no me cayó la lotería este año / I did not win the lottery this year), whose referent is an animated entity in which a prize corresponds through luck.

Optionally, there can be an adverb with the semantic role of spatial and temporal location, cause and substitution (e.g. Caeume a mí en vez de a ti / me cayó a mí en vez de a ti / I won instead of you), addition, exclusion (e.g. Caeunos a todos menos a él / nos cayó a todos menos a él / everyone won but him)...

The construction is active, with a non-agentive subject. A singular or plural third person is used. It corresponds to match between an animated entity and another inanimate. Its prototypical aspect values are dynamic, telic and punctual.

- To be eliminated.

(21) O Celta cae en cuartos de final / Celta fell in quarter-finals

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate* and the semantic scheme is *affected-action*.

The subject precedes the predicate. It can come after the predicate owing to the complement theme (e.g. Cae este equipo en cuartos / knocked out in the quarter-finals). Its semantic features are [+human] e.g. Nadal cae en semifinal / Nadal knocked out in the semi-finals, [-animated], [+concrete], [±common], [partial control].

The complement is not compulsory, although an adverb often appears represented by a prepositional and adverbial phrase, expressing spatial or temporal location, cause, manner (e.g. Cae vergonzosamente en cuartos por esa complicada lesión / fall shamefully in the quarter-finals due to a complex injury), origin (*de*+nom. phrase) with the strengthening use of *se* in Spanish (22). There can also be an adjective phrase which redundantly influences the fact of being eliminated from a type of competition (e.g. Caen eliminados en cuartos / knocked out in the quarter-finals).

The construction comes close to the middle voice. The use of *se* is admitted in order to indicate undetermined subject and in Spanish to emphasise the affected subject role. The prototypical aspect values are dynamic and telic.

- To lower something; weaken the value of something.

(23) Cae a natalidade en Sudamérica / Birthrate fall in South America

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate*, with double semantic scheme *experimenter-worsening process* and *affected-action*.

The subject can come in a postverbal position due to non-animation and to the informative transmitter priorities which place the process before the entity that experiences it, this is why this construction is used in informative headlines in the mass media, (e.g. Caen as accións/las acciones de Fenosa; caen os prezos / caen los precios / share prices fall / Fenosa shares fall; fall in prices). Its semantic features are [-animated], [+common], [-concrete], [-control].

The complement is not compulsory. An adverb often works in the semantic role of spatial and temporary location, manner and quantification, cause (e.g. Cae moito a natalidade polo paro / cae mucho la natalidad por el paro / the birth-rate has fallen due to unemployment), addition (e.g. Caeu a natalidade ademais do emprego / cayó la natalidad además del empleo / both birthrate and employment fell), exclusion (e.g. Cae o paro agás nos novos / cae el paro salvo en los jóvenes / fall in unemployment except for young people)...

The construction can show an action or a process. Third person is used in singular or plural without *se*. The aspect values are dynamic, atelic and progressive when a process is shown; dynamic, telic and punctual if a particular action is shown (e.g. Caeron os valores de Inditex repentinamente / cayeron los valores de Inditex repentinamente / Inditex share prices fell suddenly).

- The day or part of the day is coming to an end.

(25) a tarde caía sobre a enfermería da prisión de Príncipe / the evening fell on the Principe Prison Infirmary

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate* and the semantic scheme is *experimenter-modified process*.

The subject makes reference to a part of the day. This can come before or after the predicate. The postposition happens when the transmitter pays attention to the process

(e.g. Cae a noite sobre Vigo / cae la noche sobre Vigo / night falls upon Vigo). Its semantic features are [-animated], [+concrete], [+common], [-control].

The complement is not obligatory. There is often an adverb represented by a prepositional phrase, with the semantic role of spatial loc. or point on which the process and manner falls; also an adverbial phrase with the semantic role of manner (e.g. A noite cae lentamente / la noche cae lentamente / night slowly falls).

The construction shows a physical process. Third person is used in singular or plural without *se*. The aspect values are dynamic, atelic and progressive.

- With certain meteorological phenomena.

(27) o luar caía a cachón por entremedias das faias / The moon light fell on the beech trees in torrents

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate*. The semantic scheme is *strength-action*.

The subject is represented by a definite nominal phrase, which can come before or after the predicate. The postposition is due to the semantics of the construction and the non-animation. Its semantic features are [-animated], [+concrete], [+common], [-control].

The complement is not compulsory. The presence of an adverb is usually performed by an adverbial or prepositional phrase, especially with the semantic role of manner, spatial and temporal location and cause (e.g. A nevada caeu onte por tanto frío / la nevada cayó ayer por tanto frío / snow fell yesterday because it was so cold)...

The construction is active. It is used in third person, singular or plural, without *se*. The aspect values are dynamic, atelic or telic depending on whether there is a duration or an event ending or not, intensive (e.g. O sol caía con forza / el sol caía con fuerza / the sun beat down with force).

4.3 *Constructions with two or more arguments*

These constructions present two or three arguments and reflect mainly action without movement, effect production, state, situation and process.

- To come or set a thing in a certain way.

- (29) debeume caír mal a cena, que despois estiven mal de noite / Dinner did not sit well with me, because I fell ill during the night
- (30) a chaqueta gris de punto que leva posta cáelle como unha saia arredor da cintura / The grey cardigan he is wearing fits him like a glove

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate-adverb*, *subject-predicate-indirect complement-predicative*, with the corresponding semantic scheme *effect producer-effect production-manner*, *effect producer-effect production-affected-manner*.

The subject can precede or follow the predicate. The postposition is due to the centre of attention established by the transmitter and the non-animation. Its semantic features are [-animated], [+concrete], [-concrete] e.g. *Ese desgusto caeulle mal / ese disgusto le cayó mal / this trouble displeased her*, [+common], [-control]. A name belonging to the semantic field of clothing, feeding or expression is usual.

The complement is compulsory. There is an adverbial phrase, with the semantic role of manner, and a nominal phrase within the comparative structure. Other secondary semantic roles are those of spatial and temporal location and cause (e.g. *Onte coas présas caeume mal a cea / ayer con las prisas me cayó mal la cena / Dinner did not sit well on my stomach after all the rushing around*)... There can also be a dative and/or indirect complement, with the semantic role of benefited/prejudiced.

The construction has active voice form. It is used in singular or plural third person, generally with present and preterit tenses. It is not used with *se* and the aspect values are variable: in constructions where there is something that produces a particular effect the values are dynamic, telic and resultant; those constructions which insist more on the state of an entity (e.g. *A chaqueta esa non che cae ben / la chaqueta esa no te cae bien / the jacket doesn't suit you at all*) the values are stative, atelic. Other values can appear such as intensive (e.g. *A comida caeume fatal / la comida me cayó fatal / the meal did not sit well with me at all*) and iterative.

- To be or not to be a pleasing person to others.

- (33) ó xefe dos eunucos caeulle tanto en gracia aquel galego que... / The Eunucos boss liked that Galician man so much

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate-indirect complement-adverb*. The semantic scheme is *state carrier-state-affected-manner*.

The subject can come before or after the predicate. The informative transmitter priority as well as the lack of control and dative function favours the postposition. Its semantic features are [+human], [+concrete], [±common], [-control].

The complement is obligatory. There is a dative and/or an indirect complement, with human referent, with the semantic role of addressee, also an adverb (ben/bien/well, mal... / bad...), which expresses the way someone feels. Optionally, there can be other adverbs with the semantic role of temporal and spatial location and cause (e.g. Non lle caeu ben por falador / no le cayó bien por hablador / he didn't like him because he is talkative)...

The construction is active. It allows *se* to indicate indeterminate subject (e.g. Se se cae ben non hai problema / si se cae bien no hay problema / there is no problem, if someone likes you). Its prototypical aspect values are stative and atelic.

- To throw yourself on something or someone, to attack.

- (35) a grea iracunda caera sobre as adegas secretas da Prisión de Príncipe / A furious crowd will descend on the Principe Prison cellars

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate-prepositional complement*.⁷ The semantic scheme is *agent-action-ending*.⁸

The subject tends to precede the predicate. Its semantic features are [+animated], [±human], [+concrete], [±common], [+control].

The complement is compulsory. There is a prepositional complement represented by a prep. phrase with the structure of *sobre*+nominal phrase, with referent [±animate] and [±human], which expresses entity or individual on which the action is projected. Sometimes there can be an adverb with the semantic role of spatial and temporal location, manner, cause (e.g. Onte caeron iradamente sobre nós por vinganza / ayer

cayeron airadamente sobre nosotros por venganza / yesterday they descended angrily upon us, looking for revenge), condition (e.g. Sen o voso apoio caerían sobre nós / sin vuestro apoio caerían sobre nosotros / they would descend upon us if it wasn't for your support), concession...

The construction is active. It allows *se* to indicate undetermined subject. The prototypical aspect values are dynamic, telic and simple.

- To realise or not to realise something.

(37) non caía no chiste, pero despois entendino / I didn't get the joke, but then I understood it

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate-prepositional complement* and the semantic scheme is *agent-mental action-ending*.

The subject comes before the predicate. Its semantic features are [+human], [+concrete], [±common], [-control].

The complement is compulsory, though in some constructions its presence tends to be known by the context (e.g. Pois agora non caía / Pues ahora no caía [en algo] / Well, it didn't dawn on me). There is a prepositional phrase, with a [±concrete] referent, and of structure *en+nominal phrase, en+clause* (e.g. Non caio en quen chamou onte / No caigo en quién llamó ayer / I have no idea who phoned me yesterday), which expresses contents such as material, theme and perceived issue. Sometimes there can be an adverb with different semantic roles such as temporal and spatial location, cause and manner (e.g. Con semellante despiste agora non caía de todo no conto / con semejante despiste ahora no caía totalmente en el chiste / I didn't totally fall for the joke with such distraction around)...

The construction is active. It is often negative and indicates incapability to understand something. It can be used with *se* to indicate undetermined subject. The aspect values are dynamic, punctual, telic, atelic in negative structures like 'non caio en quen pode ser / no caigo en quien puede ser / I don't know who it can be', ending/goal value in 'xa caín no asunto / ya caí en el asunto / The case dawned on me'.

- Go through something or suffer a worse situation; adversity to befall someone.

(39) Despois do seu grande éxito caeu no esquecemento / After his great success he fell into
obscurity

(40) pouco despois caeulle outra desgracia. A súa muller debeu cansar de aturalo e foise /
Soon after another misfortune befell him, his wife became fed up and left

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate-adverb*, *subject-predicate-indirect complement* and the corresponding semantic scheme *experimenter-worsening process-ending*, *event-action-affected/prejudiced*.

The subject can precede or come after the predicate in constructions which present an inanimate and undefined subject. Its semantic features are variable: [+animated], [-animated] e.g. A casa caeu no abandono / la casa cayó en el abandono / the house fell into disrepair, [±human], [±concrete], [±common], [-control].

The complement is compulsory. It can be represented by a prepositional phrase, with structure *en*+nominal phrase, which has an entity reference [-animated], [-concrete]; also by a dative pronoun and/or by a prepositional phrase (*a*+nominal phrase), sometimes reinforced by an adverb of place (e.g. Menuda lle caeu encima / menuda le cayó encima / what a thing to befall him), which refers to the animated entity which suffers a misfortune. Sometimes there can be an adverb with the semantic role of temporal and spatial location, manner, cause...

The construction reflects an activity or process which ends at a given point. Those with human subject admit variation in number-person and *se* indicates indetermined subject (vgr. Cáese na desgraza / se cae en la desgracia / falls into disgrace). The aspect values are dynamic, atelic and progressive – according to the phases: inceptive, middle or terminative. When it refers to befalling adversity the values are preferably dynamic and punctual.

- To make a mistake, expose to harm or danger.

(43) coinciden en parte con algunhas autoexculpacións...: os moitos despropósitos nos que caeron durante a campaña a coalición e o candidato / They partly coincide with some

self-exonerations: the many absurdities that befell the candidate and the coalition during the campaign.

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate-prepositional complement*. The semantic scheme is *affected-action-ending*.

The subject tends to precede the predicate. Its semantic features are [+animated] and [±human], generally [+concrete], [±common], [partial control] because there is some capacity to avoid an error or danger.

The complement is obligatory. There is a prepositional phrase of structure *en+nominal phrase*, with a nucleus of semantic features [-animated], [+common], [-concrete] (e.g. *Caer nun/en un vicio / fall into bad habits; caer na/en la droga / fall into drug addiction*), which refers to a particular error, damage or danger for the entity functioning as the subject. Optionally, there is an adverb with semantic roles such as time and space location, manner and cause (e.g. *Caer de todo nas súas mans por imprudencia / caer totalmente en sus manos por imprudencia / imprudently fall completely into their hands*)...

The construction presents an action where the subject is more affected than agent. It admits the use of *se* indicating undetermined subject. The aspect values are dynamic and telic; sometimes inceptive and iterative (e.g. *Empezar a caer en... / start to fall into...; caer varias veces en... / fall several times into...*)

- To be somewhere

(45) *Nigueroá e localidades próximas que xa caen na porción portuguesa / Nigueroa and the surrounding areas fall into the Portuguese zone*

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate-adverb* and the semantic scheme *situated-situation-spatial location*.

The subject precedes the predicate, except when the transmitter wants to focus on the complement. Its semantic features are [-animated], [+concrete], [±common], [-control]. A variant of this construction presents the features of [+human], [±common], [-control] meaning ‘*acabar en un sitio donde no se pensaba / end up in an unexpected place*’ (e.g.

Fomos caer á fronteira portuguesa / fuimos a caer a la frontera portuguesa / we went to the edge of the Portuguese border).

The complement is obligatory. There is an adverb represented by a prepositional phrase or adverbial phrase (e.g. Ese lugar cae moi lonxe / ese lugar cae muy lejos / that place is far away), which indicates the positional location of someone or something.

The construction is that of state or position. It does not allow *se*, with the exception of animated subjects to indicate indetermination. With an inanimate subject the tense is normally the present or no personal forms. The aspectual values are stative and atelic; with an animated subject they are dynamic and telic (e.g. Fomos caer á fronteira sur / fuimos a caer a la frontera sur / we went down to the southern border).

- To be something within a certain field, authority, responsibility...

(47) Eso cae nas miñas competencias / That falls into my responsibility...

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate-adverb* and the semantic scheme is *situated-situation- notional spatial location*.

The subject precedes the predicate. The subject follows when the informative priorities of the transmitter thematize the predicate or the complement (e.g. Non cae nas miñas competencias abordar tales temas / no cae en mis competencias abordar tales temas / It is not my responsibility to address the problem). It can be represented by a phrase or clause. In the second case, an event is referred to. When it is a nominal entity its semantic features are [-animated], [±concrete], [+common], [-control].

The complement is compulsory. The verb is accompanied by a prepositional phrase with the structure of *en, dentro de*+nominal phrase, which indicates a non-physical place, to that which belongs to the sphere of responsibility of something or someone (person, country, institution...). Optionally, there can be an adverb with the semantic role of temporal location, manner, cause (e.g. Coa dimisión do xefe agora as contratacións caen totalmente nas miñas competencias / con la dimisión del jefe ahora las contrataciones caen totalmente en mis competencias / Following the resignation of the director, contracts are totally my responsibility now).

The construction is active, with a non-agentive subject. It does not admit the use of *se*. The prototypical aspect values are stative and atelic.

- To tally, coincide, an event or a special date to occur.

(49) O doce cae en domingo / The twelfth is a Sunday

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate-adverb*. The semantic scheme is *situated-situation- temporal location*.

The subject tends to precede the predicate. It usually indicates a date or event. Its semantic features are [-animated], [±concrete], [±continuous], [-control].

The complement is obligatory. There is an adverb or prepositional phrase with the structure *en*+nominal phrase, which signals the moment in which something coincides.

The construction is active. It does not allow *se*. It is usual to find a complex phrase acting as subject (e.g. O doce de febreiro / el doce de febrero cae en domingo / the twelfth of February falls on a Sunday). The aspectual values are dynamic, punctual and telic.

- To have certain consideration for someone.

(51) Non me cae moi ben ese home / I don't really like that man

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate-indirect complement-predicative* and the semantic scheme is *state carrier-state-affected-manner*.

The subject precedes or follows the predicate. The postposition is a consequence of the semantics of the construction and of the dative. Its semantic features are [+human], [+concrete], [±common], [-control].

The complement is compulsory. It is represented by a predicative which is an adverb or a structure introduced by *como*, which indicates someone's behaviour, and a dative (on occasions non-explicit but always latent) referring to the individual who has consideration for someone. Sometimes an adverb can appear with the semantic role of temporal location and cause (e.g. Antes caíame mal pola súa forma de ser / antes me caía mal por su forma de ser / I didn't like him before because of his way of being),

addiction or substitution (e.g. Cáeme mal ela en vez do irmán, ademais do irmán / me cae mal ella en vez del hermano, además del hermano / I don't like her, not her brother, besides her brother...).

The construction is active and reflects the state of someone seen by another person ('no caerle bien a alguien / someone doesn't like you' equals 'no serle simpático a alguien / not to be nice to someone'). It is frequent in both the affirmative and negative polarity. It allows for *se* to indicate undetermined subject (e.g. Se se cae mal cómpre saber o porqué / si se cae mal es necesario saber el porqué / if someone doesn't like you, it is necessary to know why). The aspectual values are stative, atelic and sometimes intensive (e.g. Caerlle moi pesado / caerle muy pesado / not like at all).

- To hang, to hang up.

(53) precioso vestido encarnado, cinguido na cintura cun grande pano de seda que lle caía ó longo da perna dereita / beautiful red dress, tight around the waist with a long silk scarf hanging down the right leg.

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate-adverb* and the semantic scheme is *situated-situation-spatial location*.

The subject precedes the predicate. It can follow the predicate when the transmitter focuses the interest of the message on the predicate or on the complement. Its semantic features are [-animated], [+concrete], [+common], [-control]. It usually refers to parts of the body such as hair or clothing.

The complement is obligatory. There is an adverb represented by a prepositional phrase introduced, above all, by prepositions as *por*, *ao longo de/a lo largo de*, *ata/hasta*, which express a situation content specified in the dimension, length or manner of the entity introduced and which, on occasions, are used to describe and characterise the subject.

The construction does not allow *se*. Singular or plural is used in the third person. The prototypical aspectual values are stative and atelic.

- To enter into a certain state.

(55) *as sentinelas caen nun fondo sono* / the guards fall into a deep sleep

The syntactic scheme is *subject-predicate-prepositional complement* and the semantic scheme is *experimenter-transformative process-ending*.

The subject usually precedes the predicate. Its semantic features are [+animated], [±human], [+concrete], [±common], [+control] when it intentionally goes towards a certain state, [-control] when it unintentionally enters another state.

The complement is compulsory. There is a prepositional phrase with the structure of *en*+nominal phrase, and semantic features [-animated], [-concrete], referring to the state in which one enters. There can be an adverb with the semantic roles of temporal and spatial location, cause, manner, and a predicative of the subject (e.g. *Caen atordados nun profundo sono polo veneno* / *caen aturdidos en un profundo sueño por el veneno* / fall bewildered into a deep sleep brought on by the poison)...

The construction shows a middle voice value. It admits the use of *se* with inanimate subject to indicate its undetermined character. The aspectual values are dynamic, telic, and inceptive.

5 CONCLUSIONS

We can conclude, from the analysis and the implemented theoretical basis, that *caer* is evident in constructions that present the syntactic scheme of *subject-predicate*, with semantic schemes of *affected-action* (mainly), *experimenter-process*, *strength-action*; and in constructions of two or more roles where syntactic schemes are *subject-predicate-adverb* (mainly), *subject-predicate-indirect complement*, *subject-predicate-prepositional complement*, *subject-predicate-indirect complement-predicative*, *subject-predicate-indirect complement-adverb*, with the semantic scheme *effect producer-effect production-manner*, *effect producer-effect production-affected-manner*, *agent-action-ending*, *experimenter-process-ending*, *affected-action-ending*, *event-action-*

affected/prejudiced, situated-situation-spatial location, state carrier-state-affected-manner.

Subjects are both animate and inanimate, preferably without control, agentives (agent, effect producer) and non-agentive in examples that reflect processes, states or situations. Subjects usually precede the predicate, as is the rule in this language. The difference here is that many subjects can come after the predicate due to the high number of structures with affected subject and without control, or occasionally due to the informative priorities of the transmitter and syntactic context. This characteristic confirms the remoteness of Galician from languages such as English, that present a more rigid order.

The complement can be compulsory and non-compulsory. The most common syntactic functions are adverb, prepositional complement, indirect complement. The main semantic functions are ending, affected, spatial location, manner.

The predominant type of construction is that of middle voice, with the aspect values being dynamic and stative, the first being more representative. The lexical-semantic character of the subject determines the meaning of the construction in many cases (as *follas caen* / leaves fall; *a casa cae* / the house falls; *o Barça cae...* / Barça falls).

In Galician there are hardly any pronominal variants, so when *se* appears works as an indeterminer of the subject, also it is possible to reinforce its role of affected and its presence in the construction itself.

These results demonstrate that *caer* is semantically variable and commutable to other verbs such as *derrubar*/to demolish, *sucumbir*/to succumb, *morrer*/to die, *desaparecer*/to disappear, *tocar*/to win, *baixar*/to go down, *debilitarse*/to weaken, *sentar*/to sit, *atacar*/to attack, *decatarse*/to realise, *situarse*/to place, *coincidir*/to coincide, *colgar*/to hang... It is a versatile predicate that cannot be compartmentalized within a single semantic class of movement, since it reflects a range of semantic types that includes actions, processes, states and situations. On the other hand, these analyses allow to verify the relevance of lexis, semantics and syntax interface.

NOTES

(1) Lazard (2002: 15) considers that there is a restricted transitivity (a property a verb has) in contradistinction to scalar transitivity—more or less transitivity (from bi-argument structures to passive and anti-passive clauses)—which he calls generalized transitivity.

(2) *Situated* is the semantic role that has the animate or inanimate entity having a particular situation or place in space. In this last point it is different from the state carrier, which focuses on a specific state of entity or individual represented in the subject. *State carrier* is the semantic role characteristic of the stative schemes; it refers to entities or individuals that have some kind of state or condition. *Characterized* is the semantic role that refers to an animate or inanimate entity that is qualified or characterized by another. It is usual in constructions with ‘to be’ and other similar verbs.

(3) We deal with the three voice types: active, middle and passive. The first two can be registered in state schemes. The middle voice is formed by formally active structures and by pronominal structures with *se* (Cf. Sánchez López 2002; Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou & Everaert 2003; Ackema and Schoorlemmer, 1994: 59-90; Ackema and Schoorlemmer 2006: 131-203); it presents an affected subject, which can be [+animated], without considering an agent which carries out the action, although there can be an originator. Halliday and Mathiesen (2004: 280-305) link the middle voice to a type of clause that acts under the model named “ergative” and whose subject is characterized by its semantic role of *medium*. Its presence, as well as the semantic character of the verb and of the construction, favors the postposition of the subject in many cases (Baltin 2001: 226-254).

(4) For aspect values see, inter alia, Verkuyl (1993), Smith (1997), De Miguel (1999), Bertinetto and Delfitto (2000), Thieroff (2000), Rothstein (2008). We include both the lexical aspect and *Aktionsart*—event mode—derived from the verbal lexeme functioning as predicate, and the grammatical aspect derived from morphological and syntactic procedures, and distinguish stative and dynamic contents. The first occurs in a homogeneous way through time without showing any change. The second implies activity—physical or psychological—or some change shown in certain results, and it

allows phases (inceptive, medium, terminative or cessative): punctual or instantaneous, occurring at a moment in time as opposed to durative or progressive, which progresses through time; atelic / telic, atelic lasting for some undetermined time and customarily allowing complementation, while telic shows no duration; simple and semelfactive, consisting of a single phase as opposed to interactive, multiple, or intermittent with several phases; habitual, which refers to frequent repetition; permanent, referring to continual repetition; non intensive / intensive and attenuative.

(7) *Prepositional complement*, also called prepositional object by authors such as Emilio Alarcos who presents prepositional transitivity, appointing the syntactic function formally made up by a prepositional phrase introduced by prepositions such as ‘a, con, de, en, por, sobre’. In some structures there is only one of them, which means that when the preposition changes there is also a semantic change; in other words, alternation is possible, expressing close meaning.

(8) The term *ending* (or *goal*) refers to the semantic role that indicates the animate or inanimate entity in which any type of event ends, extends, or converges. It is characteristic of the syntactic function of the prepositional complement. It is formally represented by a prepositional phrase with structure (a, con, de, en, sobre+nominal phrase).

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